

CHRISTOPHE BOUTIN

## THE CHILL OF LONESOME

**T**he *Chill of Lonesome* is the title of a bluegrass album by Ernie Thacker. Ernie, his family and friends are amazing bluegrass musicians. They live in Clinchco, Virginia.

Back in 2006, I suggested to Mélanie Scarciglia, my partner, Chris Hoover, our Good Samaritan (and producer) and Garret Linn, movie director (two of my good friends from New York), to go visit Ernie Thacker and his band, *Route 23*, and make a film about bluegrass music. Our destination was the small town of Clinchco, Virginia. We drove the 14 hours from NYC to Clinchco without knowing what we would find there. I had only seen the band once, two years earlier, at the first *Bourbon and Bluegrass Festival* in Frankfort, Kentucky and was impressed by Ernie and his brother Matthew on bass and vocals.

Ernie was, for many years, playing the lead guitar for *Dr. Ralph Stanley* as a *Clinch Mountain Boys* member then he decided to trace his own route (*RT 23*) with his brother Matthew and sister D.D..

The Thacker family are true musicians and remarkable human beings, they remind me of a modern version of the almost mythical *Carter Family*. We also had the chance to meet Ernie's parents, they invited us with our cameras into their home and happily agreed to talk and answer our questions.

A few weeks after our passage in Clinchco we were saddened to hear that Ernie had been in a car accident and was in a coma. Three years later Ernie is now back on stage in a wheelchair and recording again. (*"The Hangman"* at Pinecastle Records, with *Matthew Thacker*, bass, *Dick Roach*, banjo and *Brandon Shuping* at the mandolin) He is also accepting concert dates for the 2009 summer festivals.

We follow the lives of these good people from afar and thanks to the internet (and Chris Hoover) we manage to keep in contact. Matthew got married to his girlfriend Jen, they have now had a baby, D.D. is a mother for the second time, Dorothy, Ernie's wife, is now *RT23* band manager, recently Dick Roach suffered a heart attack and sadly Mr. Thacker Sr. died.

The material we gathered is so dense and the experience of sharing the lives of Ernie and his *troupe* so intense that, when back in our respective homes, it took us a while to edit our photos and all the movie footage. This book is my first attempt to reconstruct and share with the viewer/reader the rich mosaic of souvenirs we gathered during that week in deep Virginia.

I want to thank them all, as well as Mélanie, Chris and Garret for helping me explore a little patch of bluegrass, on what turned out to be a far from lonesome trail. C. B. - Paris, 2009

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# THE CHILL OF LONESOME

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THE CHILL OF LONESOME



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Person in white shirt and dark pants standing near a gas pump.

Light-colored pickup truck parked in the foreground.

Dark-colored pickup truck parked in the middle ground.

Dark-colored pickup truck parked in the middle ground.

Partial view of a dark-colored pickup truck on the right edge.





















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STEPHEN KING  
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KING  
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DAYTONA

DAYTONA



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10	Wasson	TX
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12	Wasson	TX
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14	Wasson	TX
15	Wasson	TX
16	Wasson	TX
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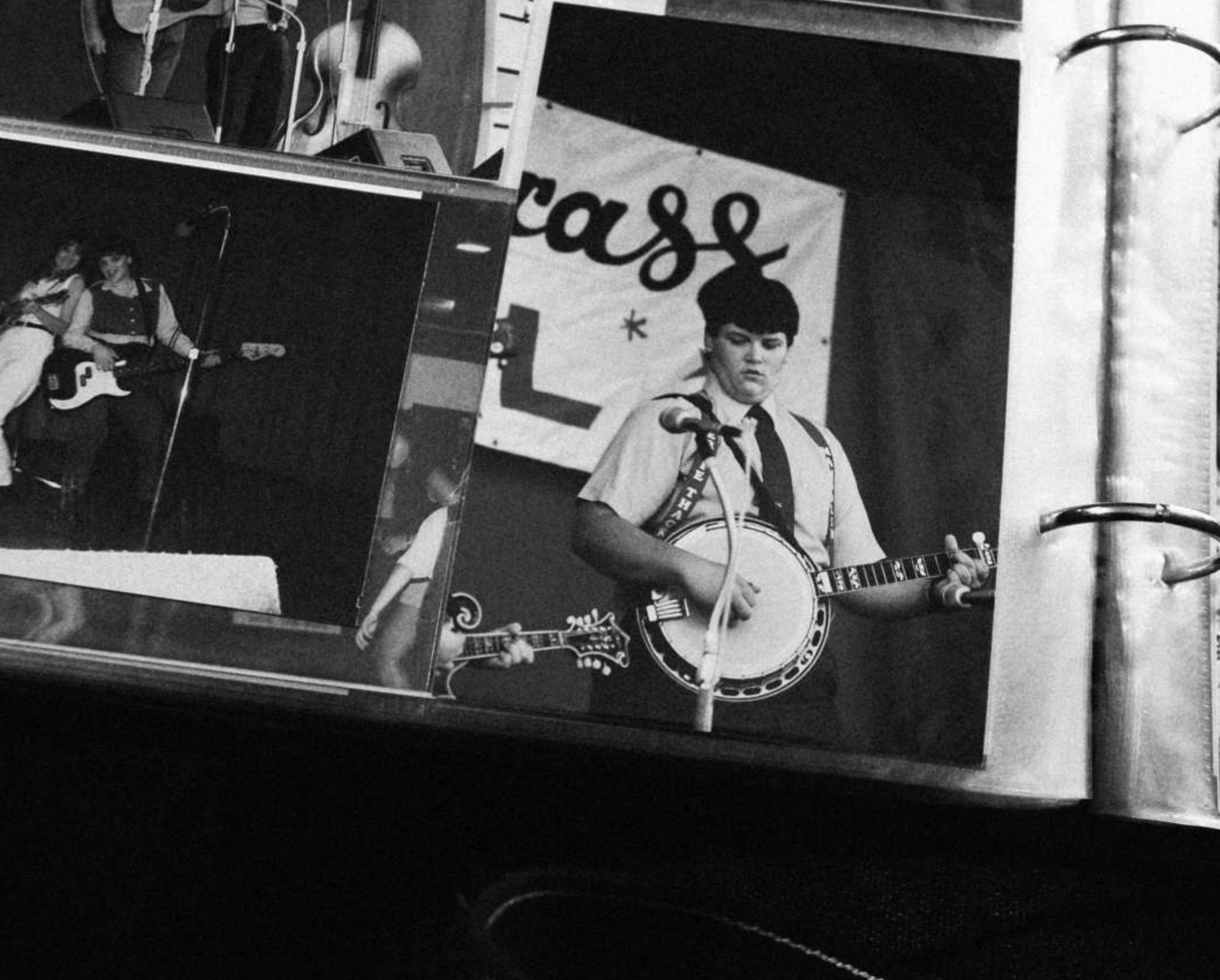


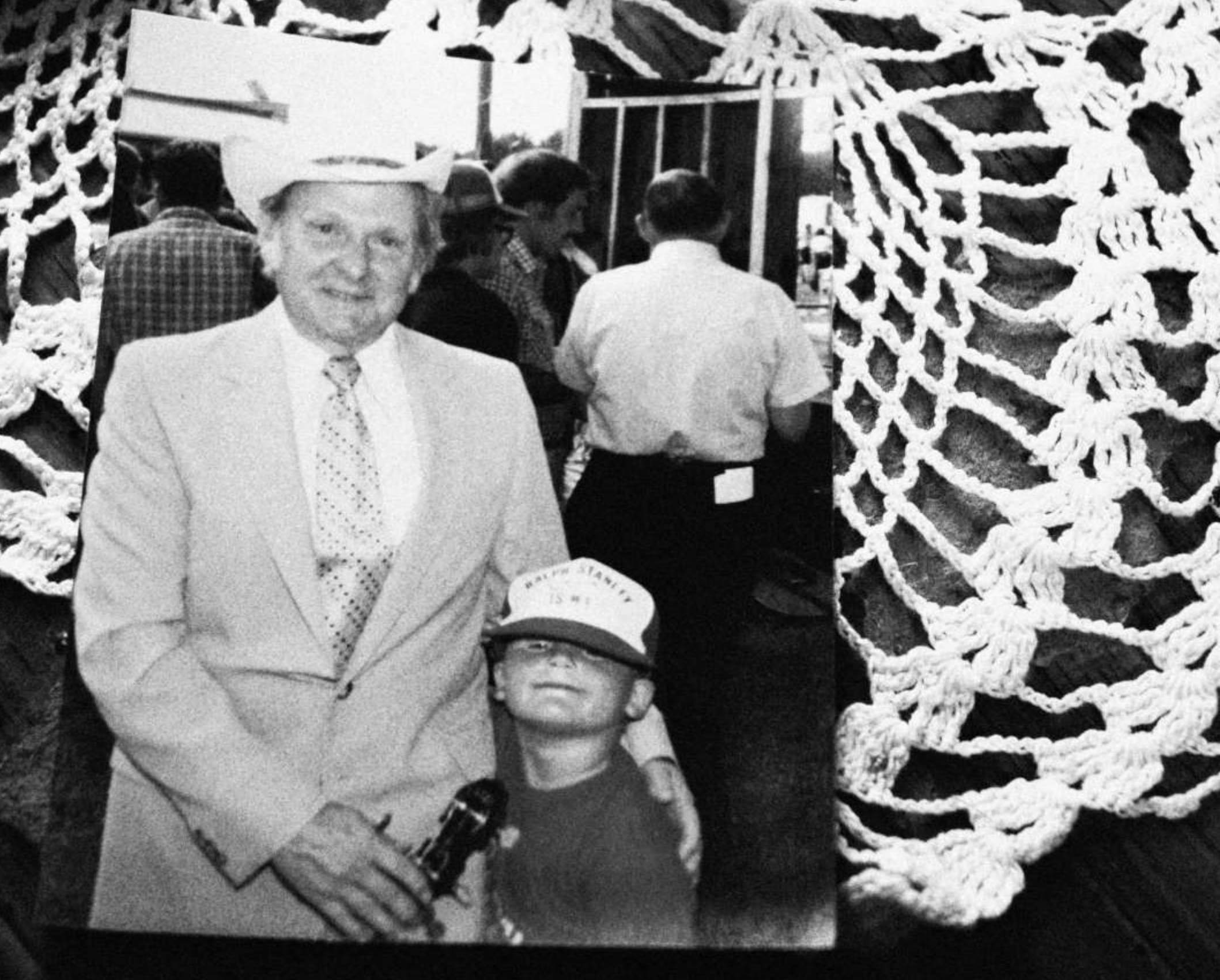






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BARROW  
ALASKA

















Welcome to Virginia







CHRISTOPHE BOUTIN  
**THE CHILL OF LONESOME**

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